

BOARD MANUALS

Board members need common information to be effective in their governance role. Having helpful information at hand provides them with the background to make informed decisions, and facilitates their performance of association duties. Assembling such information into a board manual provides a useful reference for both board and staff members.

Associations can start simply, and expand the reference manual as the organization becomes more established and sophisticated in its operations. The following outline provides recommendations along this continuum, from basic to more in-depth.

Basic Manual:

- Mission statement
- Bylaws
- Board policies and code of ethics
- Board position description
- Officers
- Committee structure
- Annual budget and most recent audit
- Board minutes for most recent year
- Board member's names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses
- Staff names, titles, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses
- Calendar of events

Fleshed-Out Manual

- Strategic plan
- Articles of incorporation
- IRS authorizing letter
- List of organizational or member services
- Staff job descriptions and office policies
- Generic job descriptions for officers, committee chairs, and committees
- Roster of committee members
- Brief historical description of board actions over the past 5 to 10 years
- Facts about liability insurance
- Organizational charts
- Authorizing annotations, spelling out who is authorized to do what

Expansive Manual

- Timeline of the growth, development, and changes in the organization
- In-depth financials, with analyses and year-to-year comparisons
- Frequently asked questions (FAQs)
- Background information on fellow board members
- Surveys or analyses of constituents wants, needs, expectations
- Program and project analyses